TROGGING BRISTLE

"SWEETLY, SIMPLY put, Spacemen 3 are the only English band that I'd walk across the sea to piss on." – Byron Coley, *Forced Exposure*.

An innocent beginning has led to a major conflict with Spacemen 3. Spiritualized's Jason Pierce tells Sam King about his rift with Sonic Boom. Photo by Steve Double

QUITE WHAT Byron will make of the Spacemen's current line-up spasm – as Sonic Boom toys with the idea of sacking everyone including himself from the band – is uncertain.

But it's unlikely that Coley would be vaulting the ocean to dribble his dick at Spiritualized, the latest ensemble to centre around sonic co-pilot Jason Pierce.

In contrast to Spacemen 3's enervating, electronic yowl, Spiritualized's music is like a warm, guitar carved womb, a different emotion for a different kind of band.

Originally perceived by Jason as "a way of getting back out on the road" after the tedium of recording Spacemen 3's forthcoming LP, Spiritualized was never intended as competition for the Spacemen.

But like Sonic Boom's solo LP, 'Spectrum', Spiritualized was instantly linked to the band by both promoters and the music press – a connection that has led to a flurry of apoplectic 'statements to the press' from Sonic renouncing all contact with Jason and the band and widespread panic among both groups' record companies.

JASON HIMSELF is perplexed by events. Spiritualized, he maintains, was always a low key thing. Their current single, a cover of 'Anyway That You Want Me' which The Troggs made famous, is simply a one-off release.

"The whole aim of the band was to create a different kind of feel from the Spacemen," Jason maintains. "The idea was to create an atmosphere, but make sure it was a totally different one and I think we've done that pretty well.

"I suppose 'Anyway That You Want Me' could easily have been the next Spacemen single, it would have fitted in well after 'Hypnotized', but the rest of the Spiritualized material wouldn't have done."

He's right. Spiritualized's is a more restrained, melodious sound than the Spacemen's, a sound that's as comforting and reclined as the latter's is edgy and uptight.

And although it's moving and highly listenable it emphasises the feeling that, ultimately, despite their mutual animosity, Sonic and Jason need one another's creativity to survive.

Without Jason's melodic influence, Sonic is just another droning depressant, and without Sonic, Jason remains palatable but horrendously safe. Without Spacemen 3 it seems that neither will survive much longer.

Perhaps the real irony of the whole debacle is that Jason never anticipated Sonic's wave of frustration. Even as late as last week (while Sonic toyed with the idea of distributing leaflets at the band's London gig) Pierce was talking about both the forthcoming Spacemen album (due in the autumn) and the one after that.

Hardly the thoughts of a man due to descend on the dole office. The way he sees it Byron's got a lot more pissing to do.

SPIRITUALIZED: A different kind of band